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The Scourge of Damascus

A Story of the East.
BY
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The army worm is essentially a grain-eating insect, though it often feeds upon other plants, and is said to prefer oats to corn.

The British war office said to be considering the training of dogs to carry water and provisions to sick and wounded in time of war.

Atmospheric sharp say that even at the equator the average temperature of the sea at the depth of a mile is but four degrees above freezing point.

Despatches from Siberia say that the crops, owing to the two months' drought, are almost a total loss. Measurements have been taken in every famine.

The desolation produced 12,000 miles per plant, sheepherds pasture 37,000 miles, 45,000, chamois 16,000, deer 42,000, and the common mountain goat 44,000.

The British war office has increased the rates of pensions and allowances to the widows and orphans of soldiers killed in action or dying of wounds in South Africa.

In a London case just tried a messenger boy was sent to the office of a leading paper with an order for a large advertisement. He did not arrive with it till the next day, when it was too late. The paper sued the company for lack of quickness in their agent and got nominal damages.

The majority of ladies would be surprised if they were informed that a bottle of lavender water contains but about a thimbleful of pure oil, for a larger proportion would not only consume the water too strongly for use, but would burn holes through the handkerchief wherever the sent unguent.

A novel way of administering justice and bestowing impartial punishment on juvenile offenders was shown in a Chicago court the other day. Two boys were on trial for fighting, accompanied by their respective mothers. The justice simply had the mothers swap sons and thus administered spankings. The punishment the juvenile received was vigorous.

The population of Norway is about 2,200,000 souls. It was 2,110,000 in 1881, with a probability that 15,000 seamen and fishermen were absent from home on the day that the census was taken, and that there has been a net increase of 15,000 since. This is an average of 15.39 inhabitants to the square mile, showing Norway to be the most thinly settled of all European countries.

Fiber pipes and conduits, made from wood pulp and treated with preservatives, are now being put in use. After the usual grinding the pulp is washed, screened, passed through a heating engine, then screened again. These operations completed, a thin sheet of the pulp is wound on a core until the desired thickness is secured. After drying the tube is aerated with a preservative. Its ends are then finished in a lathe to any desired form.

The United States has not yet consented to pay stamp duties to Great Britain, and that "without representation" in her parliament. Revenue stamps to the value of twenty-five thousand dollars were required to make legal the ten-million-dollar deed of gift by which Mr. Carnegie endows the Scottish universities. So large a stamp duty was never before paid into the British treasury. Yet the Patrick Henrys and Sam Adamses of today merely smile.

"If there is an old man in the Northwest, he is so from choice," said the superintendent of one of the great railroads, at the beginning of the harvest season. He needed two hundred men for construction work, and had sought them all the way from Chicago to Vancouver. About that time press dispatches told how tramps who constantly wander over the west were making a frantic exodus eastward. This fact proves that the demand for labor was urgent. Perhaps it proves also that the west began to act upon St. Paul's wise command that if any will not work, neither shall he eat.

The chief of the Good-Roads train, which made a spring tour through the South, declares that people will flock to see the actual construction and operation of a model road who would never go to a conversion to hear the subject discussed by the highest authorities. Acting on the principle that a dozen or observation is worth a gallon of honey, a firm of Scotch publishers have sent twelve representative British workmen to the Buffalo Exposition to inspect American machinery and industrial methods, and to force in themselves a nation of future progressions in their various trades.

One-fourth of the sea-carrying power is in the hands of thirty large companies of various nationalities. Only one-tenth of these are American, and it controls only 8,000 tons out of the total of 56,000 tons controlled by the thirty companies. In the last decade England has built 4,625 steel steamers, with a capacity of 9,785,000 tons. In the same time America has built only 465 steel steamers, with a capacity of 74,000 tons, and 158 of these steamers, representing 450,000 tons more, were for the inland commerce of the great lakes.

A newspaper of Lyons, France, states that a syndicate is forming at St. Ursanne, in the Jura mountains, for the purpose of erecting a large gun factory, capable of turning out the largest cannons, and that Alfred Krupp, he says, are now as useful as those of India.

General Stoneman statistics show that on the average a workman is seven times as liable to injuries accidents as a working woman, owing chiefly to the difference in employment, but partly also to the greater recklessness of the men.

The amount of milk received in New York daily is about 1,000,000 quarts. In extremely warm weather this amount is often exceeded by one-half. The supply comes from points ranging from 30 to 200 miles distance from the city.

"I remember," pursued Osmir, "it all comes to me now. I buried his bruised head, and bound up his wounds, while you brought the corselet which my mother provided."

"It was, my lady, I have seen the slave since—have never seen him several times—he has brought messages, to your father—and I know that his gratitude is strong. If Osmir has any power to open the prison door, and I can find him, there may be some hope."

"But can you find him?" asked the princess. She spoke eagerly, and no longer sought to conceal the real cause of her anxiety.

"I can try," returned the attendant; "and even here we have a fortunate help. Shabah, who has been so long my servant, is a near friend to Osmir. I will take Shabah with me, and we may find the man we seek. Shall I not leave at once?"

"Yes, Alibah. Go at once. Be careful, for all may depend on the secrecy of your movements. I have entered upon this master, and I will now give all my energies to its consummation. Go—bring me the answer as quickly as you can."

The bondswoman left the apartment, and when Ulia was once more alone, she started to her feet, and moved to the window. The fluid was back upon her cheek, and the sparkle was in her eye. Her pure blood was circulating with new power, as for the time, she forgot the king in the memory of the youthful chieftain.

As less than an hour Alibah returned, and the beam upon her face told very plainly that she had not been entirely disappointed.

"My good mistress," she said, "Shabah has served us well. I found him without difficulty, and he at once went alone in search of Osmir. He found him at the royal palace, and has brought him hither."

"Bring Osmir!"

"Yes."

"And what does he say?"

"I have not spoken to him of Julian. I thought you had better do that. You may have more influence."

"Very well—bring him up at once! I will shrink from nothing now."

"In a little while the tall, dark form glided within the chamber of the princess. He bowed low as he entered, and when he saw the lady Ulia, he sank down upon her knee.

"The youthful chieftain bowed his head, and pressed his heavily laden hands upon his heart. There was no one more—one whom he had hoped to see again in the coming time—one who had left an impression in his soul which had warmed and quickened his whole being. But why think of her? What could the beautiful daughter of Abd el Cassim be to him? In a few short days she would be the wife of his bitterest enemy."

Thus missed the prisoner, standing erect, with his manacled hands clasped upon his bosom, where he was aroused from his reflections by the sound of breaking bolts, and in a few moments more the door of his dungeon was opened, and the rays of a lamp penetrated the place. Two men entered, closing the door after them; but the eyes of the chieftain were not yet used enough to the light to distinguish either his forms or features.

"Forlorn lady," he said, "Alibah informed me that I can be of service to you. Give you service and, and my life has been yours ever since. Command me."

At first Ulia had been startled by the appearance of the powerful black within her chamber; but when she remembered the service she had done him, and when she saw how gently the beams of gratitude fell upon her from his brown eyes, she regarded her captor with a smile.

"I will not command you, Osmir. I can only ask you to assist me. You may be able to serve me, and you may not be able. But I will not decide you with useless words. You do not yet know what I seek."

"I do not, lady."

"You helped to bring the robber chieftain to Damascus."

"Who told you that?" He was not startled with fear; but he rather seemed to wonder how the princess had gained the information.

"Do you know a man named Hesdaddan?"

"Yes, lady. He is second in command of the robber band."

"He has been here, Osmir, and he has induced me to use my influence towards gaining freedom for his chieftain. I may not explain to you, but nevertheless I am willing to confide that I do much desire to free this Julian from the power of the king. Can you help me?"

He bowed his head, and quietly arose to his feet.

"Lady," he said, "I did help in the capture of the young chieftain; but when I came to know him I would rather have served him had it been in my power. I found him a generous, honorable man and I learned to love him; but I was bound by an oath to the will of Judah, and I could not disobey. I wish I could save him now."

"Can you do it, Osmir?" I do not wish that the king should kill him. We thought you might have access to his dungeon—that you might, at some time, be set to guard him."

"It is, lady, but I am not to be on the guard again until daylight."

"And to-morrow may be the last," uttered the princess, painfully. "If you cannot help us our hope has an end."

Osmir moved back and leaned against the wall, with his head upon his hand.

"Lady," he said, after much thought, "I have one source of hope. My companion, Selim—who who was in the work of capturing—watch over the chieftain's dungeon in mid-night. Selim may be saved. If he will, Julian may be saved. Will he hasten away at once and exert this only influence I possess?"

"And when can I know the result?" asked Ulia.

"Within two hours past midnight," said Osmir. "That is," he added, "if I have any result to bring. If I do not succeed, I may not return at all."

"At two hours past midnight," pursued Ulia. "Hesdaddan is to be in my power."

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